

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing Of Claims:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of creating area party lines, the method comprising:

receiving a first telephone call at a first local call station directly over a first telecommunication link, the first telephone call providing an area party line indication, wherein the first telephone call providing the area party line indication comprises dialing at least one digit after the first telephone call was received at the first local call station, the area party line indication corresponding to a geographic area associated with at least one call station;

receiving a second telephone call at the first local call station directly over a second telecommunication link, the second telephone call providing the area party line indication; [[and]]

in response to receiving the area party line indication of the first telephone call and the second telephone call, bridging the first telephone call to the second telephone call at the first local call station to establish a first area party line between the first telephone call and the second telephone call, wherein the first local call station is configured to accommodate further bridging of calls received subsequent to the first

telephone call and the second telephone call to the first area party line established between the first telephone call and second telephone call;

receiving a reassignment indication from [[a]] the caller in the first area party line;
and

in response to receiving the reassignment indication from the caller in the first area party line, bridging the caller from the first area party line to a second area party line.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the first telephone call and the second telephone call are landline calls, the first telecommunication link and the second telecommunication line are landlines, and the first local call station comprises a landline SSP.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the first telephone call and the second telephone call are wireless telephone calls, the first telecommunication link and the second telecommunication link are wireless links, and the first local call station comprises a wireless telephone base station.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
receiving a third telephone call at a second local call station over a third telecommunication link, the third telephone call providing the area party line indication for the first local call station;

transferring the third telephone call from the second local call station to the first local call station;

receiving the third telephone call transferred from the second local call station at the first local call station; and

in response to receiving the third telephone call with the area party line indication, bridging the third telephone call with the first telephone call and the second telephone call to further establish the area party line between the first telephone call, the second telephone call, and the third telephone call.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein the first and second telephone calls are landline calls over landline telecommunication links to the first local call station, wherein the local call station is a landline SSP, and wherein the third telephone call is a wireless telephone call and the second local call station is a base station, and wherein transferring the third telephone call comprises directing the wireless telephone call from the base station to the landline SSP.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein directing the wireless telephone call to the landline SSP from the base station comprises detecting at a location server linked to the base station the landline SSP corresponding to the locality of the base station, and passing the wireless telephone call to a gateway to the public switched telephone network with an indication of the landline SSP, and passing the call through the public switched telephone network to the landline SSP.

7. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein the first and second telephone calls are landline calls over landline telecommunication links to the first local call station, wherein the first local call station is a first landline SSP, and wherein the third telephone call is a landline telephone call and the second local call station is a second landline SSP, and wherein transferring the third telephone call comprises directing the landline telephone call from the second landline SSP over the public switched telephone network to the first landline SSP based on the indication of the area party line of the first landline SSP provided by the third telephone call.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein directing the landline telephone call from the second landline SSP over the public switched telephone network comprises directing the landline telephone call from the second landline SSP over a long distance network to the public switched telephone network of the first landline SSP.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:
detecting whether the first local call station has reached a maximum area party line capacity; and
when the first local call station has reached a maximum area party line capacity, then providing a message to the next incoming call with an area party line indication.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the message includes an option to be called back to an area party line when available, the method further comprising:

receiving a selection of the option and storing a number for the incoming call that has provided the selection;

detecting when capacity at the first local call station can accommodate an incoming call and then calling the line identified by the number; and upon receiving an answer to the call to the line, bridging the line into the area party line.

11. (Original) The method of claim 6, further comprising:

detecting that the wireless telephone call has switched to a different base station; and

switching the wireless call to a different landline SSP through the public switched telephone network, wherein the different landline SSP bridges the wireless call into a different area party line.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, further comprising upon detecting that the wireless telephone call has switched to a different base station, providing an option to the wireless telephone call to switch to a different area party line, and wherein switching the wireless call to a different landline SSP occurs only when the wireless telephone call selects that option to switch.

13. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein the third telephone call providing the area party line indication for the first local call station comprises the third telephone call dialing an area code and an exchange identifying the first local call station, and dialing a four digit area party line indicator.

14. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein the third telephone call providing the area party line indication for the first local call station comprises:

the third telephone call dialing an area party line indicator;

the second local call station receiving the party line indicator and providing an option to the third telephone call for a local area party line or a distant area party line;

and

the third telephone call providing an area code and an exchange to indicate the distant area party line at the first local call station.

15. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

detecting that the first telephone call is the only telephone call indicating the area party line;

providing a message to the first telephone call, the message providing the option to be called back to the area party line when additional telephone calls indicating the area party line occur; and

when the first telephone call provides the option, then storing a number for a telephone line of the first telephone call and upon receiving the second telephone call indicating the area party line, calling the telephone line corresponding to the number

and bridging the telephone line with the second telephone call upon an answer of the call to the telephone line.

16. (Original) The method of claim 4, further comprising:

after bridging the third telephone call with the first and second telephone calls to further establish the area party line, receiving a selection from the first telephone call and the second telephone call to enter a private forum;

removing the first telephone call and the second telephone call from the area party line upon receiving the selection to enter the private forum; and

establishing a connection between the first telephone call and the second telephone call separate from the area party line after removing the first telephone call and the second telephone call from the area party line.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16, further comprising:

after establishing the connection between the first and second telephone calls separate from the area party line, receiving a selection from the first telephone call and the second telephone call to exit the private forum;

ending the connection between the first telephone call and the second telephone call separate from the area party line upon receiving the selection to exit the private forum; and

bridging the first telephone call and the second telephone call with the third telephone call to add the first telephone call and the second telephone call to the area party line after ending the connection between the first telephone call and the second telephone call.

18. (Currently Amended) A method of creating area party lines, the method comprising:

receiving a first telephone call at a first local call station directly over a first telecommunication link, the first telephone call providing an area party line indication, wherein the first telephone call providing the area party line indication comprises dialing at least one digit after the first telephone call was received at the first local call station, the area party line indication corresponding to a geographic area associated with at least one call station;

receiving a second telephone call at a second local call station over a second telecommunication link, the second telephone call providing the area party line indication for the first local call station;

transferring the second telephone call from the second local call station to the first local call station based on the area party line indication of the second telephone call;

receiving the second telephone call transferred from the second local call station at the first local call station; [[and]]

bridging the second telephone call with the first telephone call at the first local call station to establish a first area party line between the first telephone call and the second telephone call, wherein the first local call station is configured to accommodate further bridging of calls received subsequent to the first telephone call and the second telephone call to the area party line established between the first telephone call and second telephone call;

receiving a reassignment indication from a caller in the first area party line; and in response to receiving the reassignment indication from the caller in the first area party line, bridging the caller from the first area party line to a second area party line.

19. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein the first telephone call is a landline call, the first local call station is a landline SSP, wherein the second telephone call is a wireless telephone call, the second local call station is a base station, and wherein transferring the wireless telephone call comprises determining an indication of the landline SSP based on a locality of the base station and passing the wireless telephone call to a gateway to the public switched telephone network with the indication of the landline SSP, and passing the call through the public switched telephone network to the landline SSP.

20. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein the first telephone call is a landline call, the first local call station is a landline SSP, wherein the second telephone call is a landline telephone call, the second local call station is a second landline SSP,

and wherein transferring the landline telephone call comprises passing the landline telephone call over a long distance network from the second landline SSP to the public switched telephone network of the first local call station.

21. (Currently Amended) A method of creating area party lines, the method comprising:

receiving a first telephone call at a first local call station directly over a first telecommunication link, the first telephone call providing an area party line indication, wherein the first telephone call providing the area party line indication comprises dialing at least one digit after the first telephone call was received at the first local call station, the area party line indication corresponding to a geographic area associated with at least one call station;

receiving a second telephone call at the first local call station directly over a second telecommunication link, the second telephone call providing the area party line indication;

in response to receiving the area party line indication of the first telephone call, transferring the first telephone call to a central call bridging station;

in response to receiving the area party line indication of the second telephone call, transferring the second telephone call to the central call bridging station; [[and]]

based on receiving both the first telephone call and the second telephone call from the first local call station, bridging the first telephone call to the second telephone call at the central call bridging station to establish a first area party line between the first telephone call and the second telephone call, wherein the central call bridging station is

configured to accommodate further bridging of calls received subsequent to the first telephone call and the second telephone call to the area party line established between the first telephone call and second telephone call;

receiving a reassignment indication from a caller in the first area party line; and in response to receiving the reassignment indication from the caller in the first area party line, bridging the caller from the first area party line to a second area party line.

22. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein the first telephone call is a landline telephone call, the first telecommunication link is a landline, the second telephone call is a landline telephone call, the second telecommunication link is a landline, the first local call station is a local landline SSP, and the central call bridging station is a conferencing server.

23. (Original) The method of claim 21, wherein the first telephone call and the second telephone call are wireless telephone calls, the first telecommunication link and the second telecommunication link are wireless links, and the first local call station comprises a wireless telephone base station.

24. (Original) The method of claim 21, further comprising:
receiving a third telephone call at a second local call station over a third telecommunication link, the third telephone call providing the area party line indication for the first local call station;

transferring the third telephone call from the second local call station to the first local call station based on the area party line indication for the first local call station;

transferring the third telephone call from the first local call station to the central call switching station based on the area party line indication;

receiving the third telephone call transferred from the first local call station at the central call bridging station; and

based on receiving the third telephone call from the first local station, bridging the third telephone call with the first telephone call and the second telephone call at the central call bridging station to further establish the area party line between the first telephone call, the second telephone call, and the third telephone call.

25. (Original) The method of claim 24, wherein the first and second telephone calls are landline calls over landline telecommunication links to the first local call station and wherein the third telephone call is a wireless telephone call and the second local call station is a base station, and wherein transferring the third telephone call comprises directing the wireless telephone call from the base station through a gateway to a public switched telephone network of the first local call station.

26. (Original) The method of claim 25, wherein directing the wireless telephone call to the public switched telephone network comprises detecting the first local call station indication based on the locality of the base station and passing the wireless telephone call to the public switched telephone network with an indication of the first local call station.

27. (Original) The method of claim 24, wherein the first and second telephone calls are landline calls over landline telecommunication links to the first local call station, wherein the first local call station is a first landline SSP, and wherein the third telephone call is a landline telephone call and the second local call station is a second landline SSP, wherein transferring the third telephone call comprises directing the landline telephone call from the second landline SSP over the public switched telephone network to the first local call station and from the first local call station to the central call bridging station, and wherein bridging the third telephone call with the first and second telephone calls is based on the transfer of the third telephone call from the first local call station to the central call bridging station.

28. (Original) The method of claim 27, wherein directing the landline telephone call from the second landline SSP over the public switched telephone network comprises directing the landline telephone call over a long distance network.

29. (Currently Amended) A method of creating area party lines, the method comprising:

receiving a first telephone call at a first local call station directly over a first telecommunication link, the first telephone call providing an area party line indication, wherein the first telephone call providing the area party line indication comprises dialing at least one digit after the first telephone call was received at the first local call station,

the area party line indication corresponding to a geographic area associated with at least one call station;

receiving a second telephone call at a second local call station over a second telecommunication link, the second telephone call providing the area party line indication for the first local call station;

transferring the first telephone call from the first local call station to a central call bridging station based on the area party line indication;

transferring the second telephone call from the second local call station to the first local call station, and from the first local call station to the central call switching station based on the area party line indication; [[and]]

bridging the second telephone call with the first telephone call at the central call bridging station to establish a first area party line between the first telephone call and the second telephone call based on the transfer of the first telephone call and the second telephone call from the first local call station, wherein the central call bridging station is configured to accommodate further bridging of calls received subsequent to the first telephone call and the second telephone call to the area party line established between the first telephone call and second telephone call;

receiving a reassignment indication from a caller in the first area party line; and in response to receiving the reassignment indication from the caller in the first area party line, bridging the caller from the first area party line to a second area party line.

30. (Original) The method of claim 29, wherein the first telephone call is a landline call, the first local call station is a landline SSP, wherein the second telephone call is a wireless telephone call, the second local call station is a base station, and wherein transferring the wireless telephone call comprises passing the wireless telephone call from the base station through a gateway to the public switched telephone network with an indication of the first local call station, passing the call through the public switched telephone network to the first local call station, and passing the wireless telephone call from the first local call station to the central call bridging station where bridging the second telephone call with the first telephone call occurs based on the transfer from the first local call station.

31. (Original) The method of claim 29, wherein the first telephone call is a landline call, the first local call station is a landline SSP, wherein the second telephone call is a landline telephone call, the second local call station is a landline SSP, and wherein transferring the second telephone call to the first local call station comprises transferring the second telephone call over a long distance network.

32. (Currently Amended) A telecommunications switching point for establishing area party lines, the telecommunications switching point comprising:
at least one termination point for receiving incoming telephone calls over telecommunications links, the at least one termination point being configured to detect an area party line indication of the incoming telephone calls, wherein the at least one termination point being configured to detect the area party line indication of the

incoming telephone calls comprises the at least one termination point being configured to detect at least one indicator corresponding to a geographic area associated with the at least one termination point; and

a bridging point for bridging incoming telephone calls to establish a first area party line, wherein the at least one termination point is further configured to connect the incoming telephone calls to the bridging point upon detecting the area party line indication, and wherein the bridging point is configured to bridge [[the]] at least two incoming calls received from the at least one termination point, wherein the bridging point for bridging incoming telephone calls is further configured to bridge at least two incoming calls and reassign the bridged calls from the first area party line to a second area party line.

33. (Original) The telecommunications switching point of claim 32, where a first portion of incoming telephone calls are received over telecommunications links directly interfaced to telephones and a second portion of incoming telephone calls are received over telecommunications links directly interfaced to additional telecommunications switching points.

34. (Original) The telecommunications switching point of claim 32, wherein the telecommunications links are landlines.

35. (Original) The telecommunications switching point of claim 32, wherein the telecommunications links are wireless.

36. (Currently Amended) A telecommunications switching point for establishing area party lines, the telecommunications switching point comprising: at least one termination point for receiving incoming telephone calls over telecommunications links from a plurality of telecommunications switching points; and a bridging point for bridging incoming telephone calls upon detection of an area party line indicator corresponding to a geographic area associated with the at least one termination point, that are the incoming telephone calls being transferred from a same telecommunication switching point of the plurality of telecommunications switching points to establish a first area party line for the same telecommunications switching point, wherein the bridging point for bridging incoming telephone calls is further configured to bridge at least two incoming calls and reassign the bridged calls from the first area party line to a second area party line.

37. (Original) The telecommunications bridging station of claim 36, wherein the telecommunication switching points of the plurality are identified by unique exchange numbers.